

## Byford has left a 'terrific platform', says Andy Lord, as he takes the lead of TfL

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Interim London Transport commissioner Andy Lord says that his predecessor Andy Byford “set up a terrific platform” that Transport for London (TfL) can use as a launch board.

In a wide-ranging exclusive interview with RailBusinessDaily on 24 October at the launch of Bond Street on the Elizabeth line, he also spoke about the ongoing financial situation affecting Transport for London (TfL) and industrial action.

It was confirmed in late-September that Andy Byford would step down from his role, with Andy Lord moving up from his role as TfL chief operating officer until a full-time successor was found.

Speaking exclusively to RBD, Andy Lord said his intention was to “very much carry on the legacy that Andy [Byford] has created for us. They are big shoes to fill and he’s done an amazing job. Everybody’s sorry to see him go but he set us up with a terrific platform that we can use as a launch board.”

The new interim commissioner said that he wants to work closely with central government and City Hall to see how TfL can continue to get appropriate funding for major new capital programmes.

“My big focus is how we get passenger numbers up and get our revenue, and also our sustainability and environmental agenda. There’s a lot to be done, and, of course, all of that underpinned by becoming financially sustainable and operational by the end of March 2024.” That date is when the most recent funding agreement between TfL and the government, which was announced on 30 August, expires.

“We do have a commitment from government that they are open to talking to us about how they would help with major rolling stock projects. So I’m keen to progress those talks as soon as we’re able to,” Andy Lord told RBD.

Discussing the industrial action affecting TfL, he said: “I have been right in the middle of discussions with our trade unions. I have a very good relationship with the general secretary of both the RMT and ASLEF and we’ve got to work together to see how we can deliver the savings. I think there’s a lot that can be done quite quickly. We already guaranteed no redundancies, this is about sustaining TfL’s future and giving job securities for those who are already employed by TfL and I think we can resolve that pretty quickly.

“Obviously, people are concerned about pensions, but there are no plans on the table. We’ve just met the conditions of the funding agreement, and I just encourage the trade unions to talk to us and see how we can reach agreement and remove this uncertainty.

“And more importantly, industrial action is just not doing anybody any good. It’s undermining our message to our customers. It’s damaging our reputation. And it’s actually concerning for all of our colleagues. And I really encourage them to work with us to see how we can reach agreement. And certainly in the meantime, ask them to reconsider taking industrial action which really isn’t anybody’s interest.”

Andy Lord also told RBD that there are separate discussions regarding London Underground and London Overground as the latter is operated on TfL’s behalf by Arriva Rail London which is responsible for the discussions he said.

The interim commissioner also revealed to RBD that plans for TfL to take over more of London’s commuter rail services are on the back burner. “We’ll wait to see what happens with Great British Railways and what happens with the government. My priority at the minute is how we maintain the security of TfL services.

Clearly we’d be delighted if government wants to have a discussion with us about future growing of TfL. We think we could offer a good service but we need to have the investment and the support to enable that should it come up but it’s not a priority for us at the moment.”